

Clare Henry

**Glasgow Print
Studio exhibition
reviews**

1981

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2nd February 1981

A Dutch treat

THE Glasgow League of Artists have gone Dutch at the Glasgow Print Studio Gallery, Ingram Street. Throughout February they present "Graphic Work from Limburg," the art of nine artists living in Maastricht.

It is a reciprocal venture. On two occasions since 1975 the Glasgow League and the Dutch have swapped exhibitions and study visits to their mutual benefit. This has been something special for our artists. On the other hand it is more run of the mill for the Dutch because money is lavished on them. They have social security schemes, studio facilities and travel grants on a scale unheard of in Britain.

Nevertheless, the work on show, though competent enough, is hardly arresting. One wonders whether all these handouts achieve the desired result. But it is interesting to compare their work. At first sight misleading because of its soft, pale colours, Pieter Sonnemans's silk screen triptych of a child plugged into a life-support system is merely macabre but Leon Janssen's strong woodcuts are more impressive. His use of solid black areas and diagonal lines is very successful, especially in "Sum-

mer in Town" and "Embrace."

Jo Frenken's etched series of coolly-considered blow-ups of torn posters contrast with Rene Glaser's unresolved and sketchy monotypes.

CLARE HENRY



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7th April 1981

ART: Clare Henry

Inspired by fantasy

ELSPETH Lamb and Christine Doyle are print-makers with distinctive, detailed, often decorative styles. Their exhibition at the Glasgow Print Studio Gallery until April 29 shows the importance drawing plays in their work, predominantly etching and lithography, but with some water colours and pencil sketches.

Both trained at Glasgow School of Art and their work over the past three years displays their development well.

Elsbeth Lamb's earlier work was mostly etched in fine-line, full of imaginary scenes and strange Alice in

Wonderland happenings. Her "Chinese Teapot" (1978) includes a Hieronymus Bosch figure, a serpent handle coming to life and a genie escaping through the spout, or offset by a distant landscape, yet all held together in a memorable monochrome composition.

Recently lithography enticed her away from etching. She began these lithos in similar linear style but they have since blossomed into bold areas of brilliant colour. Her series of an underwater swimmer is particularly successful.

Christine Doyle's etchings often result from the combined inspiration of the poetry of Dylan Thomas, Yeats or Sylvia Plath, and on-the-spot drawings from her sketch book. Her imagery of Pre-Raphaelite ladies, children, animals and birds coupled with entwined leaves and flowers form melancholy dream-like scenes of mystery which hint at medieval tapestries.

Her love of patterns and ornaments spills across the etching plate from fabrics and oriental rugs to foliage,

feathers and fur making richly textured decorations in tones of soft brown and blue.

Over recent years her characteristic style and subject matter has remained unchanged but her work has developed a marked confidence and assurance.

1. Entertainments

COMPASS GALLERY

178 WEST REGENT STREET
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DENNIS SHIELD'S

Sculptures, Reliefs, and
Paintings
To 30th April
Monday to Saturday
10.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

4. Theatres

DO YOU live in Greenock, Gourock, Port Glasgow? If so, an exciting new play called "Civilians" based on wartime happenings in your area, starring Fulton Mackay, can be seen at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, from Monday, 26th May to Wednesday, 27th May. Strictly limited tickets are available for all seats to residents of the above areas at two for the price of one. Telephone Scottish Theatre Company 041 332 8061/2 for full details.

ic evening

accompanied by John Scringier at the piano.

This was a programme of delight, an evening of nostalgia and cabaret at its best. The range and flexibility of the artists displayed the sheer power of controlled operatic singing with the full-blooded laughter of outrageous comedy.

Glasgow Print Studio

CLARE HENRY

Yugoslavian Printmakers

ARTISTS have a reputation for being disorganised but you don't expect gallery administrators to be tarred by the same brush. Many are, after all, civil servants, most are academically qualified in some way and only a few are ex-artists. Yet, lately, galleries are doing their damndest to emulate artists.

Perhaps it's a sign of the times. Everything should be open-ended, free-wheeling, casual to a degree. Why bother to keep to a schedule? Why provide a catalogue? Why bore everyone with labels on pictures? After all, it's more fun to rely on guess work: guess who the artists are, when the catalogue will arrive — guess, even, when the show will open.

I've gone off guessing — gone off peering round the back of the frame trying to read an indecipherable label but anxious not to pull the picture off the wall. I'm going off being told the printer's got problems, his mother is sick, his car broke down (why the hell doesn't he get a taxi) and, yes, of course, the catalogues will be there by next week.

Too many galleries work to rule, the rule being: conceal anything helpful; don't give dates, addresses, telephone numbers (your correspondent tries to communicate with the artists before making judgments), artists's biographies or background information. And if I find life difficult, how about the punter?

Maybe I should evolve a scale of crossed palette knives to recognise conscientious gallery administrators who produce well-organised exhibitions.

There are some. The Tate Gallery is one. Until July 16 it has loaned "Yugoslavian Printmakers" (shown there earlier this year) to the Glasgow Print Studio Gallery. The exhibition contains 87 prints of varying degrees of interest but Mersad Berber's fabulous colour woodcuts of Byzantine richness are outstanding. Red, black and gold, encrusted pattern surrounds beautiful porcelain heads of the Infanta Margarita (courtesy of Velazquez) and other Spanish princesses. They are superb enough to merit the climb up the stairs.

4th August 1981

ARTS/REVIEW

Glasgow Print Studio Gallery

CLARE HENRY

Smaczne—Polish Food

QUEUING for food is a way of life in Poland, and workers and housewives have cause to complain every day about empty shops, reduced meat rations, and price rises. Now hunger marches have started, yet food is still being exported to earn foreign currency. Much of this was experienced back in 1979 by artist Iain Patterson.

Visiting a small Silesian market town he found food in short supply, fresh fruit and green vegetables unobtainable, and the meals in the only restaurant in town dull and monotonous. The quest for

interesting fare drew a blank, but what he did find in an unlikely street corner kiosk were two picture postcards of Polish culinary art, complete with recipes.

Thus, fortified by two-dimensional food, he began the drawings which comprise "Smaczne—Polish Food," now on show at Glasgow Print Studio Gallery. If you can't get the substance, you may as well have the dream.

However, these are definitely not straightforward drawings to embellish a cookery book, nor are they an advertiser's appetising exaggeration. Although Patterson's starting point may have been Barszcz z Uszkami (beet soup with dumplings) or Paczki (raised doughnuts) the subsequent abstractions of monochrome ovoids or grey, textured rectangles, tangents and curves, though beautiful, could well be almost anything.

So, Pierozki ze Szpinakiem, for example, resembles a piece of unexplored lunar landscape: or crevices, outcrop and steep gorges; Chłodnik (sour milk soup) is like an evanescent milky way.

We return to earth, though, with Cheese Dumplings—heavy, dough-

coloured lumps which look all too real! But they are the exception among this array of pale and insubstantial food which is as difficult to grasp on paper as the Poles are finding in real life. Ironically, many of the ingredients are more readily obtainable here than in Poland.

King's Theatre, Glasgow

IAIN GRAY

Barbara Dickson

FROM Edinburgh to Falkirk and from Glasgow to Dundee, Barbara Dickson has been engaged for the past week in a quiet invasion of the concert halls of her native Scotland.

Backed by four of the best musicians in the business, and with a newly-released album under her belt, she graced the boards of Glasgow's King's Theatre on Sunday, playing to an audience of all age groups.

A "Star Wars" style synthesizer solo

4. Theatres

RIKKI Fulton returns in *Let Wives Tak Tent* at the King's Theatre, Glasgow. Best seats are free. 041 532 8061/2.

9th October 1981

Glasgow Print Studio

CLARE HENRY

Scottish Opera Design

VISUAL impact obviously contributes in no small way to Scottish Opera's success, but even the most ardent of opera buffs often take the designers' work for granted.

Now Glasgow Print Studio have organised an enterprising exhibition "A Decade of Scottish Opera Design" which gives a chance to see the pencil outlines and colour sketches that provide the all-important starting point for those breathtaking stage costumes.

The 16 freelance designers present come from all over the world; New York, Stockholm, London, Germany. Their back-grounds vary; for example Ingrid Rossell studied fashion with Dior and later sculpture, while Peter Rice first trained as a painter at the Royal College. Their work is also wide ranging; Alan Barrett designed for the film "Far From the Madding Crowd" and Sue Blane did the costumes for the original version of the "Rocky Horror Show!"

Why all this diversification? Well, designers are poorly paid and need to juggle four or five productions into one year to make ends meet.

Their ability to change their style to suit the tone or mood of each production is all important and best seen in Rice's superb work for "Ariadne"; a naiad's Grecian drapes one minute, naughty nineties bathing belle the next.

Many designers rely heavily on "atmosphere" and leave the cutters and wardrobe people to supply the detail; others like Alex Reid (who has done eight productions) provide a precise characterisation.

Maria Bjornson's "Golden Cockerel" designs were a great hit. How will Allen Klein's Botticelli-inspired drapes for "L'Ecisto" be received in January 1982, for after all that is the crunch; do the designs work work on stage?

Catriona Clark and Sue Kaye have compiled an informative display. Complementary exhibitions are La Traviata (which concentrates on actual costumes and set models) at the St Enoch Centre from Saturday, and a reciprocal show of Glasgow Print Studio prints in the foyer of the Theatre Royal.

9th November 1981

Glasgow Print Studio CLARE HENRY

Scottish Young Contemporaries

RUN BY young artists for young artists this exhibition aims to provide a platform for professionals up to 10 years out of art school. It's a great idea and therefore the greater pity that the results are disappointing.

Naturally no one should automatically expect great innovations. At best only one Hockney/Kitaj/Hamilton emerges each decade from out of all the thousands of art students but, given this wonderful opportunity (excellent prize money and a four-cities tour), the response should have been less derivative.

So, we have Robin Tannoch producing pseudo-Schweiters paper collages, Mario Rossi combining classical sculpture with empty words, James Mooney's dated idea of modern art, and C. R. Coward's ugly parody of Pop/neo/dada.

Added to this: although all branches of the visual arts were invited, painting predominates and even the only big piece of sculpture (by Andy Stenhouse) is not up to his usual standards.

Among this selection it's easy to see why Ian Macpherson's rows of black on black hieroglyph figures won first prize.

He is streets ahead of the rest! Fortunately he is a committed artist and is already using his £2000 prize money to finance a working trip to Germany.

There are other rewarding works: Michelle Baucke's pale pink and grey diptych; Mackenzie Robinson's four small crayon drawings; Mark Harris's painted wood construction — but they are few. It is hoped that this competition will be the first of a series so let's hope that next year will bring less convention and more excitement. And please change the name. Young Contemporaries is such an old title!